

and cesspools of the metropolis, considering that, although undoubtedly desirable,

"To do it with an epidemic raging, and with a plague marching upon us with steady pace, in the midst of a mild and damp winter, would be, to say the least, most hazardous; while the benefit to be derived from it will probably not avail in any degree the 'back streets, lanes, courts, and alleys,' where, to apply the language of the report, 'people live irregularly, or on unsuitable diet, and at the same time filthily,' and consequently, it may be added, 'in the habitual respiration of an impure atmosphere.'"

It is undesirable, he says, too, because—

"However skillfully the operations may be conducted, it will be found practically impossible to avoid leaving heaps of the disturbed soil matters open to the air, for some time, and in some places; and the greater the force employed, the greater, in some respects, the danger to be dreaded, because of the enormous surface collectively of the filth beds, which will be for days, weeks, and months, throwing off poisonous exhalations."

On the importance of properly ventilating the sewers Mr. Hosking insists strongly, (as all would who have examined the subject) and defends Mr. Faraday's suggestion, that they should be brought into communication with the furnace-chimneys in operation throughout the metropolitan districts, and others to be erected specially for the purpose. Enough, however, for the present.

We have performed our task very ill if it be necessary to say, in conclusion, that Mr. Hosking's book shows clearly the effect which buildings are capable of exercising upon the health, comfort, and safety, of the inhabitants of towns, the importance of properly regulating them, as a means of insuring those essentials, and that it deserves the most attentive consideration of all our readers.

ON THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE GREEKS*

The proper light in which to view the architecture of ancient Greece is to take it as a study in artistic criticism from which the education and illustration of great principles of Design may excellently be obtained. And taking it thus, although the generation of architects preceding ours laboured under influence preventive of just and proper estimate which to us the march of improvement has in a great measure rendered null, still are we ourselves by no means yet possessed of fullness of power to appreciate by right criticism and to profit by careful study.

Those predecessors of ours were somehow here so blindly prejudiced, that truth was almost utterly invisible. Architectural design was—a certain thing at Athens!—a being born on the Acropolis,—and long since dead, save that we could detect the spirit yet haunting the old citadel of the Gods where it was so mysteriously generated—haunting the crumbling ruins of its substance, having no other home;—a genius of long bygone Greece, dead now and buried as it is dead, and buried long ago,—and to be searched for now as it is to be searched for in far tradition and the mouldering wreck. In its primary creation, complete development, and full perfection, Architecture was simply and absolutely a mystery of ancient Greece, and now only comprehended in the remains of ancient Grecian works. All else was spurious, if any thing at all. And I well remember myself, at the time when I took the dogmas of the teacher for granted,—how this was the only hypothesis on which I could at all get my judgment to retire,—those Greeks must surely have possessed far higher minds than we possess, and the degenerate modern must simply wonder and worship the grand old model. So immensely was the supernal virtue of its authority and pure perfectness exalted beyond all possible approach, except the enraptured reverence of the humble follower, that those old Greeks were simply Gods, and their

works at once divine, their powers most inaccessible.

That such a sublimated sentiment could of course but very ill accord with any desire for right criticism will be at once apparent; the productions of the Greeks were virtually placed beyond all reach of just appreciation and discriminating study,—the best essence of their fruitfulness was unapproachable.

This dogma of the divineness of Greek models has now very much passed away,—at least in so far that if we have not altogether brought down the idol from its throne, we have put other idols on its level.—Roman, Italian, Byzantine, Saracenic idols, Gothic idols of twenty periods and peculiarities;—Greek architecture is now merely one portion in a much-extended integer,—and indeed at the present moment a portion very little noticed. But in so far that it is so—the old government not overthrown in its nature at all, but merely in its exclusiveness—the former obstacle is only exchanged for another, and the difference between them is practically, perhaps, extremely small: so long as we continue in our present reverence for old works as models of guidance and rules of practice, the best profit of their criticism is lost, and the value of their study nullified in its best nature,—our criticism can never retire upon first principles, nor our study build up knowledge upon their basis. Yet are we certainly progressing;—amid a multitude of sins against right judgment, in which this generation is just as much more reprehensible than the last as our offences are more grovelling, theirs more refined,—and for all that new bigotries are too often even more harshly bigoted than the old,—yet is it happily true that there are now appearing, in new features which architectural thought is gradually assuming, the germs of a better system of judgment: but it will require much more progress yet before we can judge well enough to practise well—to practise as our forefathers did in that freedom and originality which seem to us so unattainable,—or even, not to speak of this,—even to see fully the beauties of their works or discern well the excellency of their principles. And among the most valuable subjects for our study and emulation, when that time shall come, will be the grand and beautiful old works of Greece!

For if ever in the world's long history there was a time when the soul of man, in sufficient force to be the public mind, seems to have soared mightily and high on the wings of its best and noblest and most beautiful nature, it was when, among a hundred compeer lustres, the eloquence of Pericles, the strange wisdom of Socrates, the thoughtful fancy of Phidias, threw the enchanting combination of their brilliancy around old Athens!

Now when I discard and denounce, as an unreasonable thing, that worship of Greek design which prevailed in the architectural world for half a century up to a recent period (a spirit which, so far as it still exists, still maintains the same unapproachable position, the same supernal and mysterious virtue in antiquity), I would at the same time say this, that we do our architectural world wrong if we allow ourselves to suppose that such romantic faith is so much an aberration of intellect—so much an extraordinary phenomenon in thought—as to deserve to be very contemptuously derided, or its adherents very violently spurned. On the contrary, among the many dogmas whose several reigns form so strange, eventful, and severe a history of man, I would not place this reverence of ours except as one of the most excusable of all.

For in every thing, we very well know, the tendency to learn by uninterrogated dogma is one of the strongest principles in our mind—and growing, perhaps, rather than lessening, as the world grows older;—we have to learn so much and so quickly,—and all the while in all this bustle and distraction, ever increasing with increasing progress. When Architecture is taught and learnt by unquestioned dogma, it has only the same reason for complaint with every single subject throughout the whole catalogue of knowledges. When the learner demands principles which he may follow, and, obtaining such, puts his implicit faith in them, and follows them as a matter of course,—this is but the common custom of all learning,—exception only proving the rule. And when the learner in this Fine-art of ours, seeking for

principles on which to stand, found rest for his foot at last, and refuge, on the Acropolis of Athens, assuredly I will say that the faith, if it was weak, was grand and generous, that put its trust in that old rock, and clung to the glorious ruins of Phidias! Perhaps in no other age, no other nation, of the world before or since, could the elevated mind obtain a model so severely, serenely beautiful! We rightly blame no Greek worshipper for credulity,—and his faith in its enthusiasm we rightly smile at as the weakness of a simple man; but he who adores the Sun of the Zenith bows before at least the loftiest idol of all,—and if we smile at his fear we can never but admire the excellency of its poetry. The reverence for the works of the genius of ancient Greece was a reverence for a very exalted thing; and he who, seeking a model, selected this, certainly made his choice the noblest that the world affords. Ever keep before your mind that Genius disdains all Model-rule;—never forget that Art owns government from Nature and Reason alone and never from Precedent; but cherish for ever those fascinating relics, for Genius shews in them one of its most successful efforts;—and acknowledge, for it is its due, that the precedent of that exquisite people is worthy of perhaps the very nearest approach to reverence that precedence can claim.

First, then, the tendency, so natural, to lose sight of first principles,—to seek for system, and, thus seeking, to adopt the dogma of the teacher too uninquiringly;—and secondly, the fact that dogmatic reverence, when it rested on the works of the glorious Greeks, had found a study the most rarely exquisite;—in these we find assuredly no small excuse for the weakness of the Greek worshipper,—indeed in many views of the question almost good reason for his faith, and just grounds for his demands.

It is my purpose to enter more in detail upon the incidents of the reverence for Greek art; but this I must leave to a resumption of my discussion; and I intend also to examine in some degree less generally the merits of Greek works; but such is naturally the conclusion of the theme: at present I will only remark now upon one point which may not be unimportant.

A reverence for the architecture of classic Greece may signify two things. In one of these senses I disclaim it entirely:—the system which would put design under its Model-rule as a sort of government by supernal right, and which thus of course declares it by implication absolutely good and above all possibility of fault or failing, is quite beyond my power of mind to comprehend. "Why should we grope," says Emerson, "among the dry bones of the past, and put the living generation into masquerade out of its faded wardrobe;—the sun shines to-day also." But in the other sense I delight to own a reverence most admiring and full of reliance. Only for mere merit, though,—and here is the point. To reverence the Art of Greece because it is old, leave to the curious antiquary. To reverence it in association with the remarkable people among whom "grew the arts of war and peace"—the land long ago the beautiful young mother of civilization and truth—the home of the hero and the sage when the world was unsplendidated—virtue and wisdom when there were simple, "unadorn'd adorn'd the most."—to reverence it for the sake of Homer and Plato and Alexander,—leave to the fascinated historian and the poet. But to look into its beauties, and, feeling their excellency, to admire,—to try to surpass, to equal, to amend, even to disapprove, and, feeling the hardness of the task, wonderingly and gratefully to render the praise of understanding—the homage of intellect,—this reverence for the exquisite memorials of the refined and elegant Greeks I should feel ashamed to think I did not feel. And the Parthenon and the Theseum and the Monument of Lysistrates need no association to enhance their value,—merit alone is a sufficient claim. I believe their eminence to be far from unsurpassable; I hope the world may yet surpass it: but I know that that eminence is very lofty; and if ever it be surpassed it must be by a giant effort! ROBERT KERR.

* Read at a meeting of the Architectural Association, at Lyon's Ion Hall, on the 17th ult.

THE BRICK TRADE.—The importation of bricks, duty free, into the port of Archangel, has lately been conceded by an imperial ukase.